

Roundtable discussion: The women of the London Filmmaker's Co-op

Nina Danino, Jean Matthee, Ruth Novaczek, Sarah Pucill and Alia Syed
Chaired by Maria Palacios Cruz

Maria Palacios Cruz: This roundtable builds on a previous discussion that was centred on the modes of film production in and around the London Filmmakers' Co-operative in the 1980s and early 1990s (see *MIRAJ* 3:2). Both roundtables have been instigated by Nina Danino, the previous one with Michael Mazière, and form part of a larger and ongoing project of critical re-examination of the Film Co-op in the 1980s and the work produced by its second generation of film-makers. I would like to welcome Nina Danino, Jean Matthee, Ruth Novaczek, Sarah Pucill and Alia Syed and thank Nina for inviting me to chair this session.

Today, the intention is to concentrate on the question of women film-makers at the Film Co-op, looking at the relationship of the work to discourses around feminism at the time. I would like to ask each of you whether there was, in your opinion, a generation of women film-makers in the 1980s and early 1990s that could be defined as a coherent movement and whether you regard yourselves as being part of it.

Ruth Novaczek: If there was an aim, it was to innovate and find our own way, to do what we liked as a generation critiquing what some of us saw as a dull and boring structuralism. I speak for myself but I felt that I had the right to challenge and innovate on my own terms, according to my own artistic values. There was a generation coming from art school that was responding to the technology and cultural mood of the time and working with Super 8 or video. Nothing really coherent emerged. We had different concerns, perhaps, around identity or aesthetics that we honed through dialogue and then we went off in different directions. I was very impressed by Abigail Child's films that Kathleen Maitland-Carter screened at the Film Co-op, Anna Thew's camerawork; Cordelia Swann and Nina Danino had a Catholic thing going on I had

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